GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1370
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2016
National Water Framework Bill
Ahlawat Smt. Santosh;Saraswati Shri Sumedhanand;Yadav Shri Om Prakash

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to introduce a National Water Framework Bill;
(b) if so, the details and salient features thereof; and
(c) the time by which it is likely to be introduced?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (PROF.SANWAR LAL JAT)

(a) to (c) The National Water Policy (2012), adopted by the National Water Resources Council, emphasizes the need to evolve a National Framework Law as an umbrella statement of general principles governing the exercise of legislative and/or executive (or devolved) powers by the Centre, the States and the local governing bodies, and thereby, making the tenets of such a consensual statement justiciable;

A Drafting Committee headed by Dr. Y.K. Alagh was constituted for Drafting National Water Framework Law on 3rd July, 2012.The Committee for drafting National Water Framework Law submitted its Report to the Government in May, 2013 and the same was placed before the National Forum of Water Resources/Irrigation Ministers of States for wider consultations at its Meeting held on 29.05.2013. The same has also been circulated among all States/Union Territories and related Central Ministries. The same was also placed on the website of the Ministry.

The National Water Framework Bill proposes to establish a framework with governing principles for protection, conservation and regulation of waters and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto. The salient features of the draft National Water Framework Bill are at Annexure.

A Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mihir Shah has been constituted on 28.12.2015 to examine the provisions of the draft National Water Framework Law and suggest changes/modifications therein taking into account inter-alia the emerging challenges in the water sector, reuse of waste water after treatment, the likely impact of climate change on water resources, importance of river restoration/rejuvenation, water contamination issue etc.

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Annexure

(Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1370 to be answered on 03.03.2016 regarding "National Water Framework Bill")

SALIENT FEATURES OF DRAFT NATIONAL WATER FRAMEWORK BILL

(1) The draft National Water Framework Bill proposes to establish an umbrella statement of general principles governing the exercise of legislative and/or executive (or devolved) powers by the Centre, the States and the local governing bodies, which should lead the way for essential legislation on water governance in every State of the Union and devolution of necessary authority to the lower tiers of government to deal with the local water situation.

(2) It proposes eighteen Basic Principles for Water Management to bring different State legal interventions within a framework of governing principles and alignment of existing legislations both at the Central as well as State level to conform to the principles and provisions of this Bill.

(3) It proposes that every individual should have a right to a minimum quantity of potable water (not less than 25 litres per capita per day) for essential health and hygiene and within easy reach of the household, which may be provided free of cost to eligible households, being part of pre-emptive need.

(4) It proposes establishment of an independent statutory Water Regulatory Authority by every State for ensuring equitable access to water for all and its fair pricing on volumetric basis, for drinking and other uses such as sanitation, agricultural and industrial.

(5) It proposes that all water resources projects conform to the River Basin Master Plan to be prepared, applicable efficiency benchmarks and take into account all social and environmental aspects in addition to techno-economic considerations.

(6) It proposes that the groundwater be protected, conserved and regulated through appropriate laws and by adequate and efficient measures using precautionary approach, with active participation of Community Based Institutions.

(7) It proposes conformance to the Service Level Benchmarks for water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and storm water drainage, as may be prescribed.

(8) It proposes that Industries either withdraw only the make up water or have an obligation to return treated effluent to a specified standard back to the hydrologic system and to file annual 'Water returns'.

(9) It proposes that the appropriate Government take all possible measures to synergise and integrate different development schemes including schemes for water conservation, sanitation and improvement of water quality at Panchayat or Municipality level, as the case may be, and further at sub basin and basin level.

(10) It proposes that a High Powered Committee be set up at the Centre and in each State for coordination and policy support mechanism between different agencies dealing with water etc.